oh, by the way #1

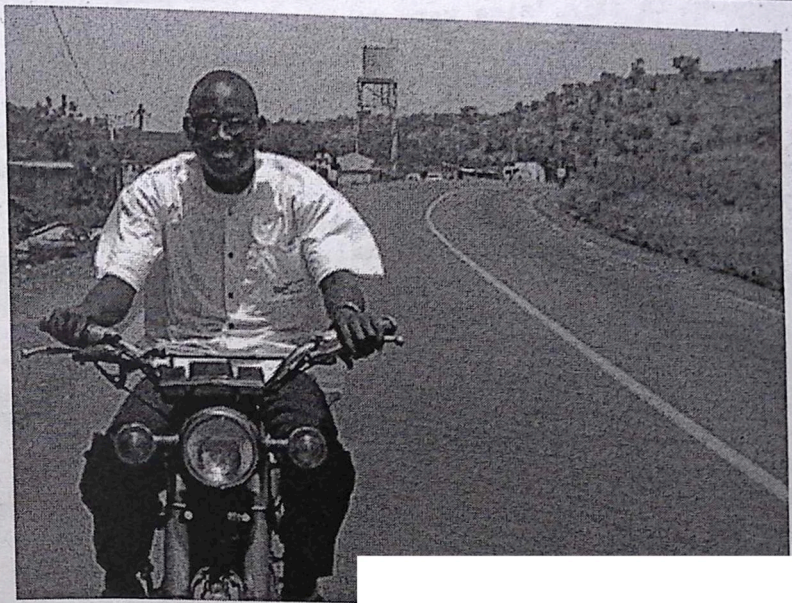
Hi! Welcome to 'oh, by the way'!

A couple of weeks ago I was reading a magazine that has a review section at the end; all of the reviews were really good, they recommended checking out every book, cd, and movie in there. My immediate reaction was 'oh man, this magazine is such a joke, they never give bad reviews, where is their cred?' But the more I thought about it, the more I realized how backwards that attitude was. If there is so much awesome and creative activity going on that it's possible to fill pages and pages with good reviews, how can that be a bad thing? What's the point of dedicating time (and space in your magazine) to stuff you don't like?

Cynicism and negativity: who needs them? There's plenty of that going around, so here is my effort to counter with something that there can't really be enough of: ENTHUSIASM! Enough of the hip posturing and aloofness, this 'zine is about a few things that have set up camp in my brain lately: things I've felt good about and would like to share. So, without further ado I give you 'oh, by the way'.

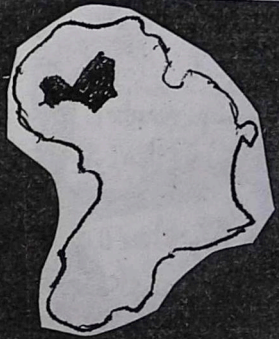
-Jacob

January 29, 2006

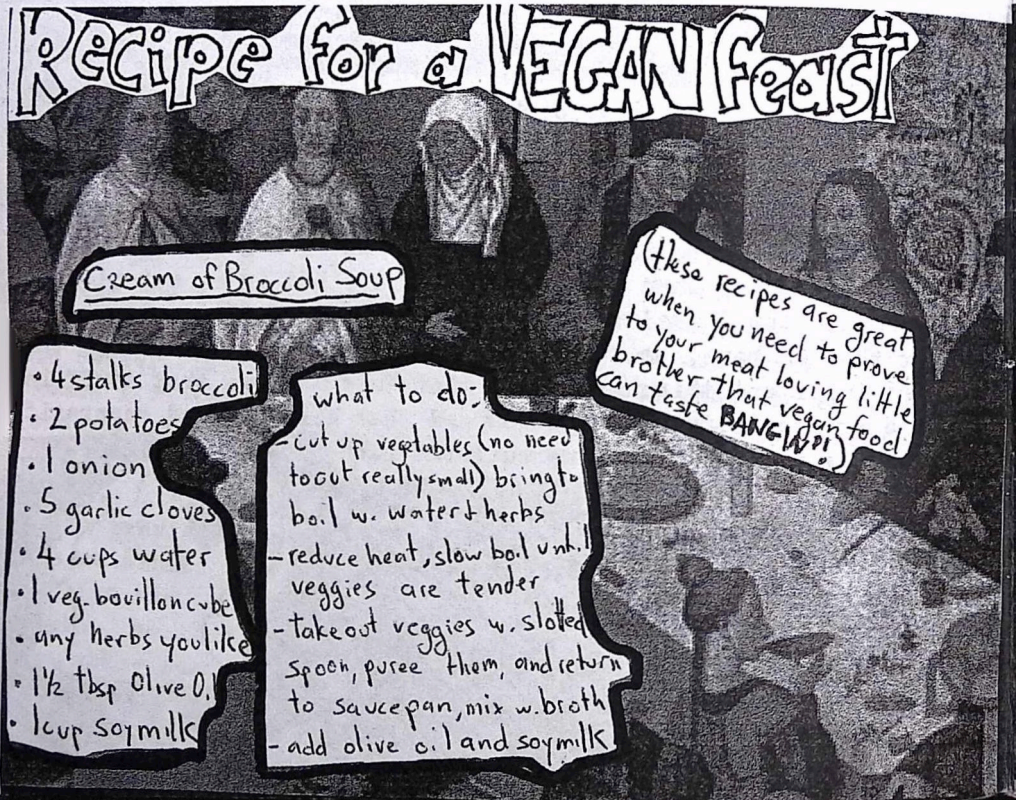


the photos in this 'zine were taken by me, in the fall of '04 while i was living in mali. the cover/back shot was taken in douentza, in northern mali - an arid area on the edge of the sahara. the photo in the center is of boys playing soccer in the shadow of a mosque in sikasso (near the borders with burkina faso & the ivory coast). the pic towards the end is of kids playing foozball in timbuktu (yeah, it is a rel place after all). every afternoon the street of malian cities are transformed into soccer fields where people play the most chaotic street games i've ever seen. i spent my last month in mali doing research on soccer, globalization, and identity in urban mali, specifically the capitol bamako, where i lived with an awesome family. i spent a lot of time with adama (the guy in the photo on the previous page) drinkin tea and riding around the city on his motorbike to visit his friends. He was getting a degree in english and writing a thesis about dictatorship in george orwell novels. he also taught at a highschool where we would hang out with the other teachers in the evenings and swat mosquitos while

making (more) tea and talking about soccer, politics, the usa, emmigration, and the rules of scrabble. despite all the difficulties of lving in a poor african city, the people i spent time with were probably the happiest most content, and pleasant people xx i've been around. my friends at the lycee were always laughing, joking, and made me feel totally welcome in a situation where i had no idea what was going on 62% of the time. its crazy when you think about it, but in my expenience the people who 'have' the least, are the most willing to share what they do have, be it time, food, bedspace, or stories. the most important thing i learned that semester that stuff is not a prerequisite to happiness and that kindness and generosity go a long way in overcoming cultural gap



Recipe for a VEGAN Feast



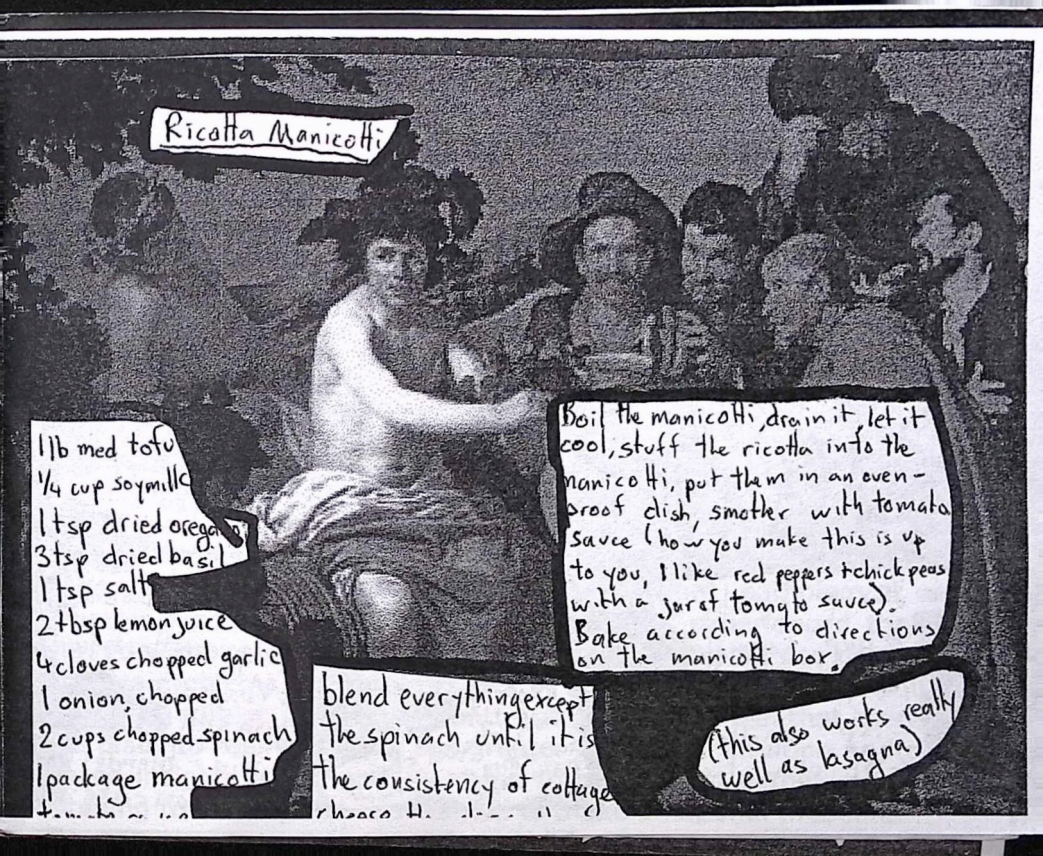
Cream of Broccoli Soup

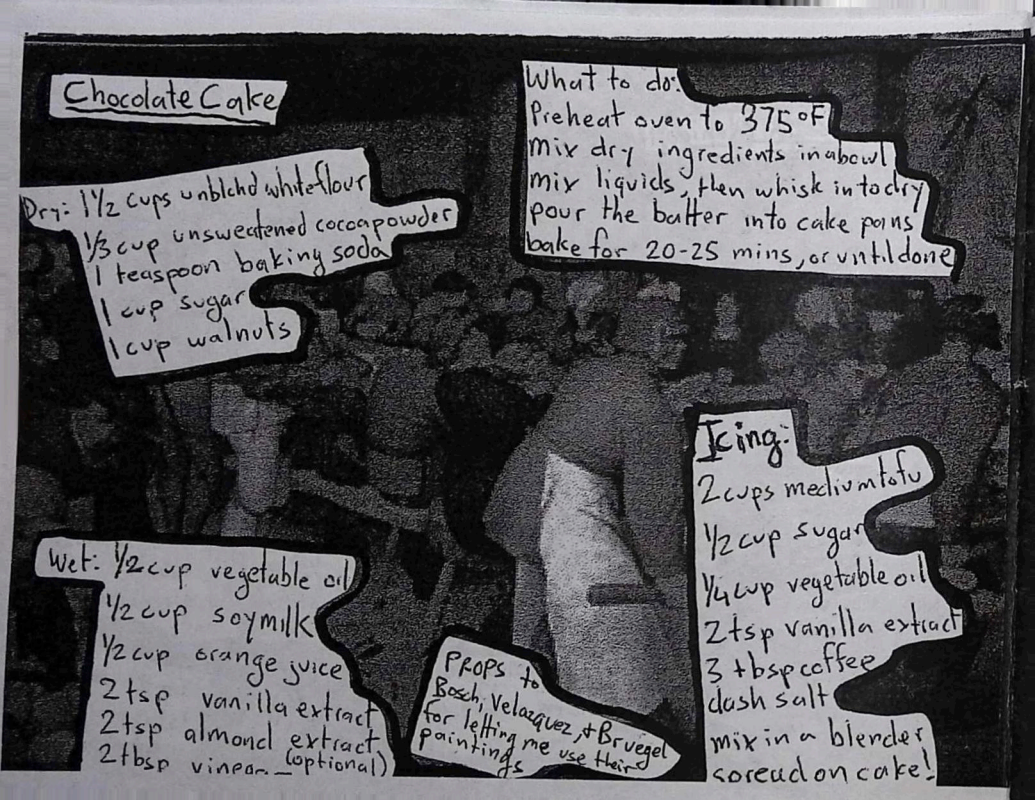
- 4 stalks broccoli
- 2 potatoes
- 1 onion
- 5 garlic cloves
- 4 cups water
- 1 veg. bouillon cube
- any herbs you like
- 1½ tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup soymilk

what to do:

- cut up vegetables (no need to cut really small) bring to boil w. water + herbs
- reduce heat, slow boil until veggies are tender
- take out veggies w. slotted spoon, puree them, and return to saucepan, mix w. broth
- add olive oil and soymilk

(these recipes are great when you need to prove to your meat loving little brother that vegan food can taste BANG-IN'!)


Ricotta Manicotti
1lb med tofu
1/4 cup soymilk
1 tsp dried oregano
3 tsp dried basil
1 tsp salt
2 tbsp lemon juice
4 cloves chopped garlic
1 onion, chopped
2 cups chopped spinach
1 package manicotti
Boil the manicotti, drain it, let it cool, stuff the ricotta into the manicotti, put them in an oven-proof dish, smother with tomato sauce (how you make this is up to you, I like red peppers & chickpeas with a jar of tomato sauce). Bake according to directions on the manicotti box.
blend everything except the spinach until it is the consistency of cottage cheese
(this also works really well as lasagna)


Chocolate Cake
Dry: 1½ cups unbleached white flour
⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup sugar
1 cup walnuts
What to do:
Preheat oven to 375°F
mix dry ingredients in a bowl
mix liquids, then whisk into dry
pour the batter into cake pans
bake for 20-25 mins, or until done
Wet: ½ cup vegetable oil
½ cup soymilk
½ cup orange juice
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 tsp almond extract
2 tbsp vinegar (optional)
Icing:
2 cups medium tofu
½ cup sugar
¼ cup vegetable oil
2 tsp vanilla extract
3 tbsp coffee
dash salt
mix in a blender
spread on cake!
Props to Bosch, Velazquez, + Bruegel for letting me use their paintings

Baltimore's American Visionary Art Museum opened in 1995 to celebrate the art of self-taught individuals driven by 'innate personal visions'. I was lucky enough to talk to the museum's founder and director Rebecca Hoffberger who raised $7.5 million from donors and persuaded the city to donate the land on the Baltimore harbor where the museum is located.

-Where did the idea for the museum originally come from?

RH: I was working at the division of psychiatry at Sinai hospital in Baltimore with groups of people who were chronic mental patience, with people with chronic mental illness who were coming back to community in what was called a psycho-social program, learning jobs skills, independent living skills, and I had worked in Mexico with healers and psychic mediums and people who heard voices but were very far from being crazy, and coming back to America, if you heard voices, if you head voices it was, no matter what, pathology it was a negative medical condition, and I sure hadn't experienced that. I'd worked with many inventors and scientists who would use dream time to solve problems, and so this path of intuition had been too pounded out of the culture, and I'm not anti-academic, but I feel that there's no one place to really trumpet the greater aspects of intuition and people whose insights and creativity came from listening within rather than listening to others, and so I wanted to make a national museum.

There was the vision to have a first rate national museum but at the same time run it with rethinking how a museum could run from every aspect so that it would be a lovesong in every single way that it developed. For example we used all downs-syndrome adults to clean the building for the first eight years and hired them at very fair wages and in the gourmet restaurant we employed people with histories of some mental illness but alongside people who didn't have it and you would never know who was who. Two of my staff come from homeless shelters, and now own their own homes, go back and mentor guys who are still in the shelter, you would never guess who on my staff those were. I wanted a place that could bring all of that under the banner of these grand themes: fabulous self taught artistry arrived at intuitively, the quotes from people throughout time on these big subjects, and complimentary programming that would explore it.

-Is there a conscious effort to display artists from less privileged backgrounds or does that just happen?

RH: No, no we've shown work by artists who've made in secret, Morton Bartlett he made these ¾ size children that made ornate clothing for etc, and he went to Harvard, was a brilliant and very wealthy person; we certainly have no priority. We often say that when ne life experience is too big for words sometimes it comes out as owerful art, and our favorite is by people who are not watching

themselves be artists, so a lot of the tragedy that happens to people I think is more acute sometimes with the poor, and they have nothing and so they go to materials at hand to express themselves: house paint and tar and whatever and so it becomes this very raw work and they don't have access to psychiatric care as much as wealth people, so I think wealthy people often come from families who have played the game of life well enough to seek other ways of ameliorating their situations, but we certainly have shown people who are multimillionaires, and have done some extraordinary things too.

-How do pieces end up in the museum?

RH: We get about a foot and a half of unsolicited mail a day...and we're always working on these themes...its like what Groucho Marx said "id never want to become a member of a club that would have me" its very rare from the people who just send in stuff that I find something great because already they're pretty self conscious and self promoting or I'll see something that's good but it may be for a show 3-4 years down the road. So we're always trying to remember the things that we cant forget. So now we're in touch with many artists who are very in touch with and respect this kind of art, we know many collectors from around the world and institution who love this kind of art, so what we do is we pick. So when things would come in, we'd have bins and say oh this one would be perfect for x y z show and

we'd throw it in, and then its like sifting for gold, we have all this stuff, nd then it comes down to what complements each other, because ou'll see two things that are similar to something else, and then you sk what's the best, and then who will lend it where is the work is it oing to cost an arm and a leg to get it in from Australia, there's many actor that come into play, and we work very fast, we have a very small staff, we can estimate, because know the space pretty well, we can say, this would be perfect in the half moon gallery this would be great as you work up, and then the work comes, and we think oh there's a hole, there's a hole here and it always appears, and it always happens that someone enters something late, and it'll be the perfect thing, and they'll have it outside the door in their van or something...so its an intuitive process and I'm sure imperfect. We have to bowl strikes because if we have a show up, its up for 11 months, so if it's not a good show it could kill us, we've been very lucky. I think because the themes are so strong and the writing is usually quite strong in our shows that there's a lot to give it life. Most media is narrative, so if you are an object oriented place we don't like to treat either artists or people as objects and we don't like to even treat works of art as objects, there's some pretty or interesting things in the world but I don't care about objects anymore, so what I'm interested in is putting works [together] that sprang from vision and then being able to give an umbrella of what that collective theme that unites those works of art, so it becomes almost a thematic play where the

works of art become the character actors and have their own strong parts and it dances with the biographies, the artists own words, the words of the philosophers or comedians, song writers on that theme from throughout time, it really becomes this powerful dynamic that respects people who may have never gone into a museum in their life but they've all thought about old age, character, addiction, war and peace, old age, all of our themes are always so big but they're the key themes that everybody has some real feeling for.

- What exhibits are coming up?

We're honoring Archbishop Desmond Tutu for his stand on gender rights at our gala in January, which will have Rosie O'Donnell as host. In February we have to hit the ground running; we're doing a huge Rumi festival - the 2nd most read poet in the world next to Shakespeare - and next year's exhibition will begin with the "The Guest House" by Rumi and the theme is on home, and the larger sense of what does home mean. It begins with Rumi's assertion that we're guest houses, that we have these sorrows that come as unwanted visitors and we have these joys and he says welcome them all and he talks about everything that happens to us is a visitor to us as a home, it's a very beautiful poem. Often, the outsiders only expression of their art is how they build their home – either the poor ones from necessity – instead of just building just a little seers shack

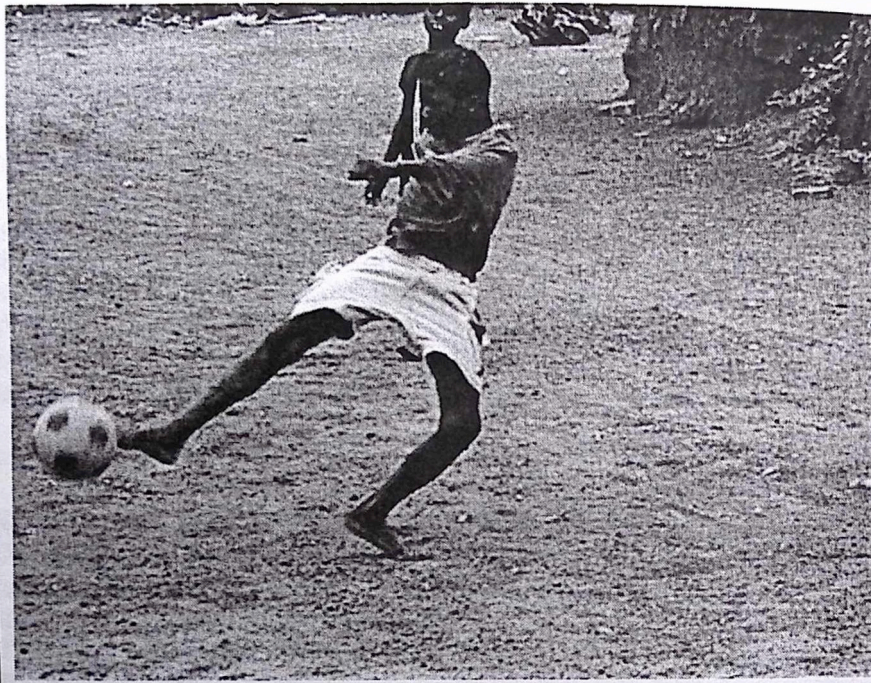
hey create wonderlands where you go oh my gosh this is the most mazing place and its out of just stuff. And then in two more years we o another rabble rousing one that is 'all faiths beautiful, from atheism o Zoroastrianism' respect for diversity of belief and we'll partner with eople like the department of religion at Harvard, the institute for hristian and Jewish studies, but we'll treat even atheism and agnostic elief as another form of faith it should be really wonderful, just ooking at demystifying religion and asking what's the difference between faith and practice and a religion and within people who say they are this or that there is so much diversity...and so what we want to do is to give people the peacefulness to find out what it is they themselves believe, or not believe...I think that's going to be great and really cause some fabulous discussion.

- How do you see the museum as part of a wider social vision?

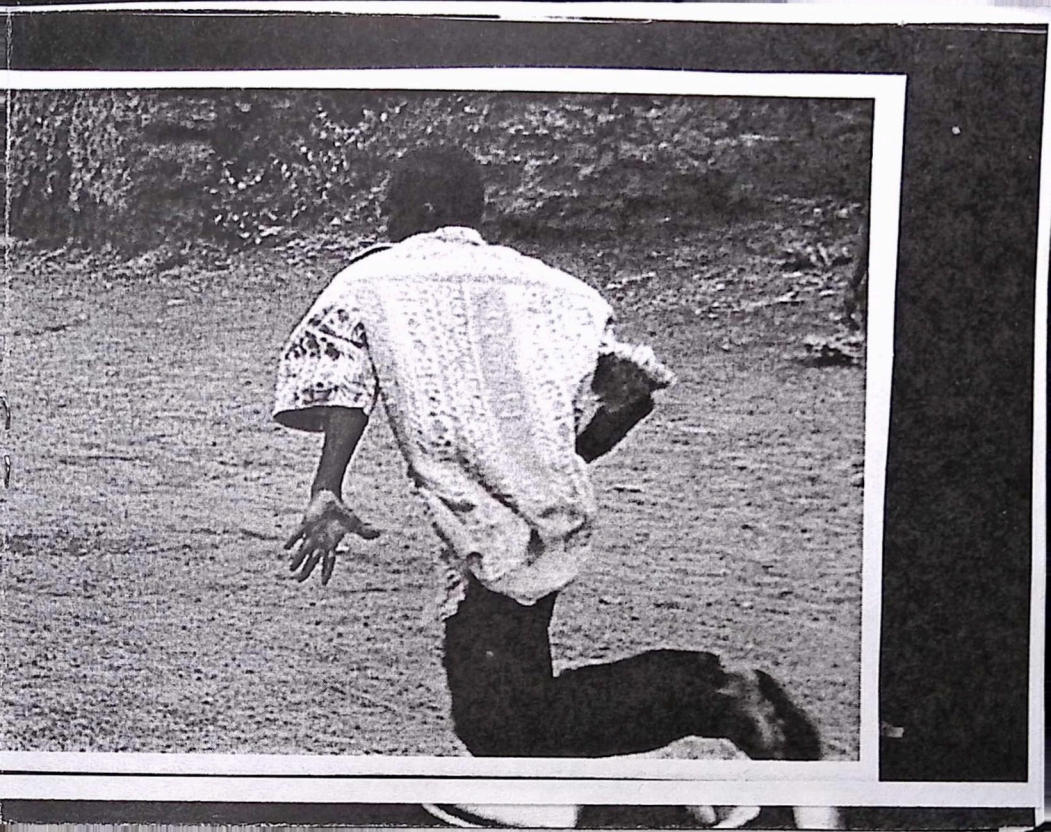
There's this whole network of people (including Anita Roddick who helped be one of the pioneers of the Social Venture Network along with people like Ben Cohen of Ben and Jerry's, Judy Whicks of the White dog café in Philadelphia) who have awakened to the fact that they can, if they're going to conduct business they want it to work as a business they don't want to be dependent on someone else ultimately, but that they want it to be a creative act, they want it to be a creative act that's also infused with ideals that are practiced throughout their

business. And generally whether you're creative in business or creative as a musician, as an artist, or as a dairy farmer who's going to make the cows happier than they've ever been, and make sure that the milk product isn't going to be contaminated...there's so many levels at which you can infuse your life whoever you are with a wakefulness and a sense of you're place in the world. The prolific nature of these people [visionary artists] whose high it is to create and who aren't thinking is this hip is this going to go am I in a good gallery, they're just doing it everyday its amazing...I hope [the museum] will help give other people the conviction to sing their own song, not to go and all be visionary artists but to think, what is my passion...to be truly visionary is the willingness to be called a fool or to be thought wrong or to make mistakes instead of treading in what has been done before and it takes a special person to have that courage.

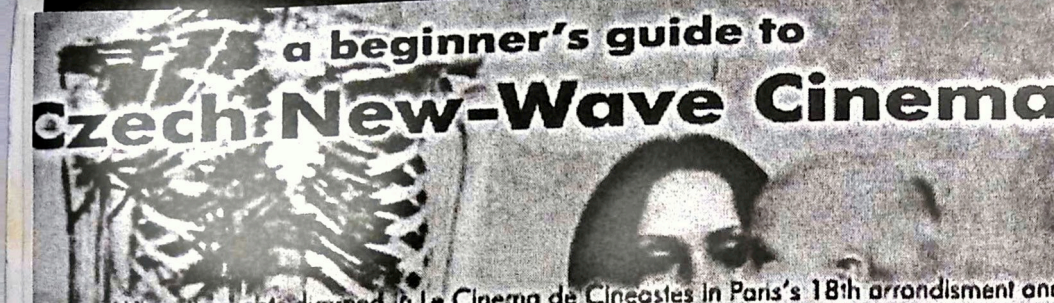
The AVAM's current exhibit is called 'Race + Class + Gender ≠ Character' and it is excellent; it runs until September 3, 2006. The AVAM is located at 800 Key Highway, Baltimore MD 21230, it costs $11 for adults and $7 for students/children/seniors. For more info check our www.avam.org or call 410-244-1900.



act that's also infused with ideals that are practiced throughout their



a beginner's guide to
Czech New-Wave Cinema



When the lights dimmed in Le Cinema de Cineastes in Paris's 18th arrondisment and Milos Forman's Black Peter started all of a sudden (no previews, no opening credits) I really wasn't sure what to expect. By the time it ended I still wasn't sure. I had stumbled across the artsy movie theater's month long Czech retrospective quite by accident (luckily at the very beginning) and over the course of the month I managed to see 5 or 6 more films. Being a beginner myself I feel qualified to write a beginner's guide to this brilliant and overlooked sub-genre that I only discovered by chance.

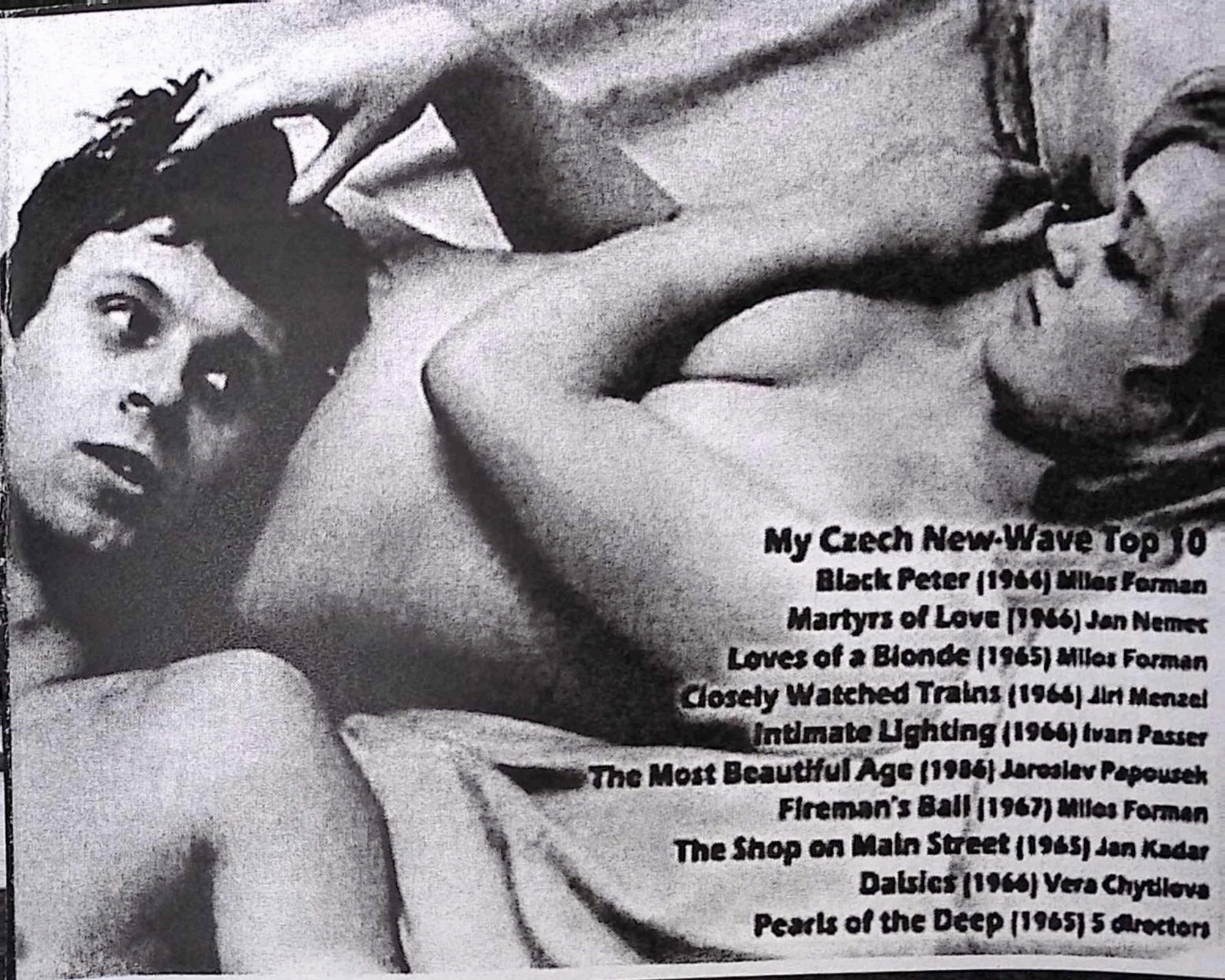
In the early 1960s, a group of young directors – recent graduates of the Prague Film School – took advantage of the increasing freedom enjoyed by artists in the Eastern Block after Stalin's death and the continuing state subsidies to break with the tradition of socialist realism that had dominated earlier Czech Cinema. The pushed Czech film from the previous socialist realist model to a far more realistic cinema verité that spellbindingly captured the dull emptiness of life in 1960s Czechoslovakia. Accused by western Marxists of being reactionary and anti-communist, the films have a subtly anarchist outlook, taking an social

The New Wave directors exhibited a remarkable aesthetic unity in terms of both technique and narrative style. Their cameras focused closely on the human details, capturing the tensions and disappointments of everyday life. Plots were generally non-existent; instead they relied on the details of human behavior to carry the films. A film would take a non-descript slice of life, and use it to paint portraits of individuals and their lives in painstaking detail. In doing so they offered a merciless and all-encompassing portrayal of the fabric of society. For the most part, dialogue was improvised giving awkwardness and clumsiness of the characters more 'authenticity'. In this respect the influence of cinema verité is clear; other influences on the Czech new wave included the works of Kafka and Hemmingway as well as the ideology and aesthetics of the inter-war Czech surrealist avant-garde.

Thematically, the Czech New Wave is characterized by an anti-authoritarian humanism that is presumably an artists response to life in a technocratic, bureaucratic society like Soviet Czechoslavakia. Protagonists in these films are neither heroes nor anti-heroes; they are simply ordinary. They often refer to the archetype of the village idiot, a popular character in Czech literature epitomized by the simple-minded protagonist of Jaroslav Hasek's The Good Soldier Svejk. Idiocy and banality combine to create a disquieting surrealism of the mundane in which characters are constantly at odds with society. The theme of the individual and society is recurrent and the respective moral/social problems of each are conflated. The comedy in Czech New Wave films comes from the frustrations and disappointments of everyday life. However, the directors are never ridiculing their characters; they manage to make the viewer identify with the bumbling misfits; this identification is part of what made these films that may seem light-hearted and benign so subversive.

There is even more subversion in the Czech New Wave's portrayal of authority. Using allegory, the New Wave directors painted the picture of an incompetent, pompous, and out of touch bureaucratic class. The absurdity of the bureaucracy is lampooned in Closely Observed Trains in which the young suicidal protagonist is charged with "self mutilation to avoid the duties of protecting the Reich" after he tries to slit his wrists when he realizes that his love in unrequited. The distance between the state and the people is demonstrated most clearly in the poor planning of two social functions in Loves of a Blond and The Firemen's Ball, in which aging men (symbols for the party) fail spectacularly in their quest to entertain and seduce young people. The farcical formality of the old is contrasted with a sympathetic, humanistic portrayal of young people.

The gap between generations is another common topic addressed in the New-Wave's films. Young people are usually shown as being alienated from the political and social worlds of adults. They turned to romance to escape the drab, dull, and unromantic lives they lead in socialist Czechoslovakia. Dances are often used in as the scenes of the awkward forced love lives of the young protagonists. Here, crushes are born and die, painfully clumsy boys dance with uninterested girls, and old men try their luck with older women. These scenes are probably the funniest of all, but there is no malice in the humor; the laugh isn't at the awkward kids, its at the surrealness of mundane social situations. After the Prague Spring and thee Warsaw Pact in 1968, there was a major political crackdown in Czechoslovakia with increased censorship of the press and the arts. This spelled the end for the Czech New-Wave, the major directors emigrated and those who remained were no longer able to weave the subtle subversion that characterized the movement into their post-68 films.



My Czech New-Wave Top 10

Black Peter (1964) Milos Forman
Martyrs of Love (1966) Jan Nemec
Loves of a Blonde (1965) Milos Forman
Closely Watched Trains (1966) Jiri Menzel
Intimate Lighting (1966) Ivan Passer
The Most Beautiful Age (1986) Jaroslav Papousek
Fireman's Ball (1967) Milos Forman
The Shop on Main Street (1965) Jan Kadar
Daisies (1966) Vera Chytilova
Pearls of the Deep (1965) 5 directors

unattain ability

We suck air in
and blow it out
and in between
there's tiny times
where we do neither.
Often I've wondered
at how beautiful it would be
to live in one of those spaces
that separate.
Of course it's impossible,
I'd die without these sucking
and blowing motions
giving me life,
but even if I could
I wouldn't want to
because, throwing all fantasies
aside,
I really do enjoy breathing

Saving That Confusion

trees howling owling noises
never say anything
they don't want one to hear

by zack haber

if you like zack's poems he has a zine out called 'to carry you being'...email him at zhaber@guilford.edu or check out parcellpress.com for a copy!

I'm not a racist but...

How often is this phrase the preface to some ridiculously racist generalization or joke about people of color? As if clarifying that the speaker is not in fact a racist before making such a statement makes it ok? What's interesting about this phrase is that there is an implicit recognition that what is about to be said is in fact inappropriate, but that somehow the speaker can get away with saying it because they are "not a racist".

There's a weird idea underlying the whole concept of racism that it is something inherent to individuals; racism is seen as something that defines us, we either "are" or "aren't" racists. The problem with this way of thinking is that it ignores the fact that everyone (of all "races") participates in racism everyday, structurally, institutionally, or personally. So to say that other people "are" racist misses the point that racism is a social process that is constituted in actions.

Essentializing racism as a property of individuals (always others) is strongly linked to the myth of the possibility of ending racism by ignoring it. Race-blindness is built around this idea, the thinking being: "I am not a racist, I don't think in terms of race, and if everyone else was like me there would be no more racism". But just as race itself is a social construct, racism is social, not individual. Instead of talking about racist people, it would be more instructive to see the actions, thoughts, processes etc that people take part in as racist. In this way, we can acknowledge and be self-reflexive about our own participation in the racism of our society.

I think that analyzing our own roles in the actions that constitute racism, as well as identifying racist ideas we have and trying to figure out their origins and how we came to have them can do much more to challenge and deconstruct racist ideologies than pointing fingers at racists ever will. So

it is possible to be anti-racist and also recognize your own position in a racist system. This recognition is a crucial step in understanding how racism works and how to be anti-racist.

Race itself is has a fascinating and revealing history. The contemporary discourse on race is founded in ideas of eugenics and social darwinism that emerged with European and American imperialism as a justification for colonial domination. Race was the scientific rational for the slave trade and the subsequent colonial projects. The white man's burden in this evolutionist paradigm was to bring civilization (Christianity) to the lesser races in order to help them become more like Europeans. The eugenics movement and early anthropology sought to prove racial differences and make broad claims about the aptitudes and cultures of colonized people.

In this history, the relationship between knowledge and power is integral to the articulation of difference. In creating knowledge about others, colonial authorities

exerted their power to define the boundaries of colonial societies, this knowledge was both a product of and means of re-enforcing and justifying the power relations of imperialism. Racial "knowledge" was an exertion of the dominant groups' power to create representations and stereotypes of their subjects. In this discourse, physical differences were exaggerated, emphasized, and made into the definitive characteristics of essentialist categories with clear-cut boundaries. In colonial societies, these boundaries were highly policed with a wide range of social and cultural taboos. In the United States, they were literally policed, being the basis of legalized discrimination until the civil rights movement of the early 1960s.

Despite the huge victories made by the civil rights movement, it is misleading to think that racism ended with changes in the law. The recurring debates about affirmative action and immigration, as well as the racialization of poverty, violence, and incarceration indicate that race and racism are still major problems in the US.

Racism is part of the lived experience of all Americans. We live it when we watch the local news, when we buy certain products, when we attend homogenous colleges, and when we think in stereotypes. Socialization teaches everyone the racist thought patterns that shape our everyday actions and interactions. It teaches us to think about people in terms of race, a concept that is itself a product of a particularly racist history of power and domination.

But the answer to these problems is not to say "I don't think in terms of race" and pretend to be an all embracing open spirit, because nobody can truthfully say this. Socialization is such a powerful force that it is simply impossible to live in the US and not be affected by racist ideologies. Race blindness is simply turning a blind eye to social problems and inequalities, with the added bonus for "enlightened" people of being able to identify themselves as non-racist and somehow removed from an oppressive and unjust social order. Ignoring the problems will not make them go away.

To really tackle racism we need to think critically about our actions and ourselves. Their needs to be more discussion about racism that takes its omnipresence into account and publicly acknowledges the pervasiveness of racist ideologies that inform us and the institutionalized racism that perpetuates inequalities. Its time for self-reflexive hand-rising to replace accusatory finger-pointing in debates about racism.

We can't think that at some point in the future there will be a fair world in which no racism exists and resign ourselves to the fact that we don't live in such a world. All of our everyday actions and thoughts are the building blocks of the world; everyday we choose either to build the status-quo or to use our actions to build something radically new. Anti-racism isn't just about having a goal, its about living in such a way to make that goal a reality, its about process. Of course the racism that informs everything in our society also informs that process and our attempts to build anti-racist community, but if we recognize and analyze this influence

(instead of pretending that it doesn't exist, by saying we "aren't" racist) it is possible to minimize it and actively deconstruct it, to some extent.

Perhaps it is time to 'reclaim' the phrase "I'm not a racist but...", and to absorb it into the process of anti-racism... "I'm not a racist, but racism informs my worldview and shapes the society I live in. I'm not a racist but I benefit from racism everyday. I'm not a racist but I sometimes I find myself thinking about people in terms of race."

I'm not a racist but...

community, but if we recognize

So, what do you think? I'd love to hear your reactions to anything in here as well as any correspondence at all really! The best way to contact me is:

[redacted]@yahoo.com

Oh, by the way, writing credits go out to Zack for his poems, everything else was written by me - feel free to reproduce at will!